

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 27, 2014

Vice Admiral Michael S. Devany  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Admiral Devany:

We write to highlight the important work scientists do at the Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) to protect our environment and support our economy, and to ask that you prioritize modernizing these important facilities through the priorities laid out in the Northwest Science Facilities Strategic Plan in future NOAA budgets.

As you know, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) scientists have been in their Montlake facility for 83 years. This facility was the first U.S. fisheries research station to focus on Pacific species. The talented and dedicated researchers at this facility have produced critical knowledge about our region and the nation's fisheries, shellfish populations and marine environments providing substantial benefits to the industry and region's economic successes. Like all research centers, years of experimentation have taken their toll on the facilities, and we now face a need for a research center that will provide the adequate and up-to-date facilities necessary to continue building on the research successes of the last nine decades.

The NWFSC facilities have started to constrain research because of their age. Older infrastructure is not compatible with new technologies that would allow researchers to use best practices for managing and sharing data. Inflexible laboratory design increases costs and limits the center's use of technology that could help solve future challenges while potentially increasing safety risks to employees. We know that NWFSC is thinking creatively and making every effort to maximize resources, while simultaneously thinking strategically about future assets, and we encourage NOAA and NMFS to support the NWFSC in continuing to do so.

The research conducted at the NWFSC has national impacts through research focused on seafood safety and the protection of fisheries. Regionally, however, the importance of the NWFSC research cannot be understated. As you know, the NWFSC conducts \$75 million in fisheries research, and these research activities support commercial and recreational fisheries in the Northwest region valued at over \$3 billion while supporting over 60,000 jobs. Research conducted at the center also benefits a regional shellfish industry in the region worth over \$107 million – the largest in the country.

Despite the growing limitations of the NWFSC facilities, the center remains a national leader in marine science. Further degradation of facilities could cause NOAA to lose these scientists and the work they are conducting to other opportunities. The NWFSC needs facilities that enable cutting-edge research to serve our nation's marine scientists for the next century. We urge NOAA to move forward with the Northwest Science Facilities Strategic Plan and to reinvest in one of its most critical scientific resources by ensuring this research and industry is a priority in future budget cycles.

Sincerely,



Patty Murray  
US Senator



Maria Cantwell  
US Senator



Rick Larsen  
Member of Congress



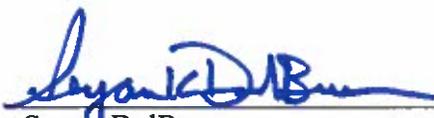
Dave Reichert  
Member of Congress



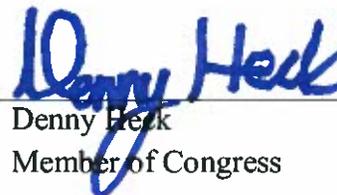
Jim McDermott  
Member of Congress



Adam Smith  
Member of Congress



Suzan DelBene  
Member of Congress



Denny Heck  
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer  
Member of Congress